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FOREWARD

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Kate P. Wint 10/15/92
Principal Investigator's Signature Date



CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD	iii
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. METHODS.	2
3. RESULTS.	3
4. CONCLUSION	4



1. INTRODUCTION

The Office of Military Performance Assessment Technology (OMPAT) operates a Telephonic Bulletin Board Service (TBBS) serving the performance and risk assessment communities. The TBBS is the primary means of communication and technology transfer for a rapidly expanding professional community that uses OMPAT products in government, industry, and private applications. Access to the system is limited by prior registration and password.

The TBBS operates under a software product called Mailnet. Intended for commercial applications, Mailnet is well suited for the technical/scientific uses characteristic of the OMPAT TBBS. It is written as a relational database with communication capabilities.



2. METHODS

The work to be accomplished falls into three areas of software development modification. These are:

1. Creation of system maintenance utilities to facilitate the creation and operation of user work groups, modification of command structures, and generation of TBBS operating reports.
2. Modification of the portions of the system dealing with public conferences among TBBS participants.
3. The current system contains software "hooks" that could enable a user to access database material external to Mailnet. These hooks are not implemented in an accessible and maintainable fashion. The third area of work involves implementing access to these hooks and adding the capability to run external executable programs from within the structure of Mailnet.

Modifications to existing software are being delivered incrementally.



3. RESULTS

Software developed (CommCntr) provides a method for remote telephonic access to the OMPAT Telephonic Bulletin Board System (TBBS), including execution of programs (such as database access) under security constraints. The only software required by the end-user is a standard communications package. This increases the accessibility of the system by researchers, regardless of their particular platform (PC, MacIntosh, etc.). The underlying relational data structure conforms to an industry-standard database format (dBase with Clipper extensions), and is compatible with the currently used TBBS software database. The access software has demonstrated the remote access capability at the early Alpha testing level, and is currently having database access methods added, at which time final Alpha testing will begin. Supporting utilities will be added during the development cycle.

Concurrent with the CommCntr development, the present TBBS software (Mailnet) is being enhanced and modified (under limited license with the OMPAT from the developer of Mailnet) to be compatible with the new software communication methods. This includes documenting the existing system, removing communication calls (to be handled with CommCntr), modifying the input/output system to use standard device access vs low-level practices, enhancing various operational aspects and correcting minor logical errors. The Mailnet system will run under CommCntr and will continue to provide electronic mail and discussion groups to the research community.



4. CONCLUSION

At final implementation, the CommCntr should greatly enhance technology transfer and communications in the research community. This product will provide a very cost effective method for researchers to share performance data and ideas by increasing accessibility to large databases regardless of the personal computer platform or communications package.

